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FRANCE: FRENCH OFFICIALS HAVE AGAIN RAISED THE ISSUE OF NUCLEAR DEFENSE COOPERATION WITH THE US.

DEFENSE MINISTER MESSMER, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] RECENTLY TOLD AMBASSADOR SHRIVER THAT THE MOST "PROFOUND ELEMENT" IN DE GAULLE'S PRESENT THINKING ON DEFENSE MATTERS IS A DESIRE FOR COOPERATION WITH THE US IN NUCLEAR DEFENSE. MESSMER SUGGESTED THAT FRANCE WOULD LIKE TO OBTAIN THE SAME STATUS WHICH BRITAIN HAS IN ACCESS TO US NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY, A GOAL WHICH OTHER HIGH FRENCH OFFICIALS HAVE RECENTLY STATED IN PRIVATE.

DE GAULLE, ACCORDING TO MESSMER, NOW REALIZES THAT THE TRIPARTITE NUCLEAR ARRANGEMENT WHICH HE PROPOSED IN 1958 WAS UNACCEPTABLE TO THE US BECAUSE OF ITS WORLDWIDE RESPONSIBILITIES. MESSMER SAID THAT DE GAULLE IS NOW READY FOR A DISCUSSION OF NUCLEAR MATTERS IN THE NARROWER FRAMEWORK OF EUROPE.

OVER THE LAST FEW MONTHS THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL REPORTS THAT DE GAULLE WAS INTERESTED IN REVIVING THE 1958 TRIPARTITE PROPOSAL, BUT THIS IS THE FIRST TIME A CABINET MEMBER HAS SOUGHT TO CLARIFY DE GAULLE'S THINKING BY INDICATING THAT HE ENVISIONS THE NEW ARRANGEMENT SOLELY IN A EUROPEAN CONTEXT.

DE GAULLE PROBABLY IS MORE INTERESTED IN THE SYMBOLIC OR PRESTIGE VALUE OF A SPECIAL NUCLEAR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE US THAN IN GAINING US TECHNOLOGY AS AN END IN ITSELF. DURING THE RECENT CAMPAIGN TO IMPROVE RELATIONS THE FRENCH HAVE OFFERED TO MAKE NO BASIC CONCESSIONS IN RETURN FOR THE CHANGES WHICH THEY ARE PRESSING THE US TO MAKE. [REDACTED]

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